

Office of the Secretary, HUD

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pay to satisfy certain debts owed the government.

(b) These regulations apply to collections by the Secretary from:

(1) Current employees of the Department and other agencies who owe debts to the Department; and

(2) Current employees of the Department who owe debts to other agencies.

(c) These regulations do not apply to debts or claims arising under the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (26 U.S.C. 1-9602); the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 301-1397f); the tariff laws of the United States; or to any case where collection of a debt by salary offset is explicitly provided for or prohibited by another statute.

(d) These regulations identify the types of salary offset available to the Department, as well as certain rights provided to the employee, which include a written notice before deductions begin, the opportunity to petition for a hearing and to receive a written decision if a hearing is granted. These employee rights do not apply to any adjustment to pay arising out of an employee's election of coverage or a change in coverage under a Federal benefits program requiring periodic deductions from pay, if the amount to be recovered was accumulated over four pay periods or less.

(e) Nothing in these regulations precludes the compromise, suspension or termination of collection actions where appropriate under the Department's regulations contained elsewhere in this subpart (see 24 CFR 17.60 through 17.77).

§ 17.126 Coordinating offset with another Federal agency.

(a) *When HUD is owed the debt.* When the Department is owed a debt by an employee of another agency, the other agency shall not initiate the requested offset until the Department provides the agency with a written certification that the debtor owes the Department a debt (including the amount and basis of the debt and the due date of the payment) and that the Department has complied with these regulations.

(b) *When another agency is owed the debt.* The Department may use salary offset against one of its employees who is indebted to another agency if re-

quested to do so by that agency. Such a request must be accompanied by a certification by the requesting agency that the person owes the debt (including the amount) and that the employee has been given the procedural rights required by 5 U.S.C. 5514 and 5 CFR part 550, subpart K.

§ 17.127 Determination of indebtedness.

In determining that an employee is indebted, the Secretary will review the debt to make sure that it is valid and past due.

§ 17.128 Notice requirements before offset.

Except as provided in § 17.125(d), deductions will not be made unless the Secretary first provides the employee with a minimum of 30 calendar days written notice. This Notice of Intent to Offset Salary (Notice of Intent) will state:

(a) That the Secretary has reviewed the records relating to the claim and has determined that a debt is owed, the amount of the debt, and the facts giving rise to the debt;

(b) The Secretary's intention to collect the debt by means of deduction from the employee's current disposable pay account until the debt and all accumulated interest are paid in full;

(c) The amount, frequency, approximate beginning date, and duration of the intended deductions;

(d) An explanation of the Department's requirements concerning interest, unless such payments are excused in accordance with § 17.72;

(e) The employee's right to inspect and copy Department records relating to the debt;

(f) The employee's right to enter into a written agreement with the Secretary for a repayment schedule differing from that proposed by the Secretary, so long as the terms of the repayment schedule proposed by the employee are agreeable to the Secretary;

(g) The right to a hearing, conducted by an administrative law judge of the Department or a hearing official of another agency, on the Secretary's determination of the debt, the amount of the debt, or percentage of disposable pay to be deducted each pay period, so

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long as a petition is filed by the employee as prescribed by the Secretary;

(h) That the timely filing of a petition for hearing will stay the collection proceedings; (See § 17.129).

(i) That a final decision on the hearing will be issued at the earliest practical date, but not later than 60 calendar days after the filing of the petition requesting the hearing, unless the employee requests and the hearing officer grants a delay in the proceedings;

(j) That any knowingly false or frivolous statements, representations, or evidence may subject the employee to:

(1) Disciplinary procedures appropriate under 5 U.S.C. Ch. 75, 5 CFR part 752, or any other applicable statutes or regulations;

(2) Penalties under the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. 3729-3731, or any other applicable statutory authority; or

(3) Criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. 286, 287, 1001, and 1002 or any other applicable statutory authority.

(k) Any other rights and remedies available to the employee under statutes or regulations governing the program for which the collection is being made;

(l) Unless there are applicable contractual or statutory provisions to the contrary, that amounts paid on or deducted for the debt which are later waived or found not owed to the United States will be promptly refunded to the employee; and

(m) The method and time period for requesting a hearing.

§ 17.129 Request for a hearing.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, an employee must file a petition for a hearing, that is received by the Secretary not later than 20 calendar days from the date of the Department's notice described in § 17.128 if an employee wants a hearing concerning—

(1) The existence or amount of the debt; or

(2) The Secretary's proposed offset schedule.

(b) The petition must be signed by the employee and should admit or deny the existence of or the amount of the debt, or any part of the debt, briefly setting forth any basis for a denial. If the employee objects to the percentage

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of disposable pay to be deducted from each check, the petition should state the objection and the reasons for it. The petition should identify and explain with reasonable specificity and brevity the facts, evidence and witnesses which the employee believes support his or her position.

(c) Upon receipt of the petition, the Department will send the employee a copy of the Salary Offset Hearing Procedures Manual of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(d) If the employee files a petition for hearing later than the 20 calendar days as described in paragraph (a) of this section, the hearing officer may accept the request if the employee can show that the delay was because of circumstances beyond his or her control or because of failure to receive notice of the filing deadline (unless the employee has actual notice of the filing deadline).

§ 17.130 Result if employee fails to meet deadlines.

An employee waives the right to a hearing, and will have his or her disposable pay offset in accordance with the Secretary's offset schedule, if the employee:

(a) Fails to file a petition for a hearing as prescribed in § 17.129; or

(b) Is scheduled to appear and fails to appear at the hearing.

§ 17.131 Written decision following a hearing.

Written decisions provided after a request for a hearing will include:

(a) A statement of the facts presented to support the nature and origin of the alleged debt;

(b) The hearing officer's analysis, findings and conclusions, in light of the hearing, concerning the employee's or the Department's grounds;

(c) The amount and validity of the alleged debt; and

(d) The repayment schedule, if applicable.

§ 17.132 Review of departmental records related to the debt.

(a) *Notification by employee.* An employee who intends to inspect or copy departmental records related to the